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NSC BRIEFING

3 June 1954

DELTA MILITARY SITUATION

I. Rapid return Viet Minh battle corps  
poses early threat delta.

A. Five divisions Dien Bien Phu  
expected around delta this  
week.

C. Could be ready for action

15 June

II. Indications possible enemy intent.

A. Rapidity return Dien Bien  
Phu, could mean plan for early 5  
offensive DOCUMENT NO.  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. X  
DECLASSIFIED

CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C

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DIA review(s)  
completed.

State Dept. review completed

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B. Training 17 new battalions

Thai Nguyen believed for  
purpose filling out battle  
corps.

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E. Recent Chinese aid included

six rocket launchers, number  
recoilless rifles, 3,300  
rounds 105mm artillery ammo.

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III. Cogny told US attachés major attack

15-20 June "almost certain."

A. He pessimistic re Hanoi;  
fears enemy will concen-  
trate Hanoi-Haiphong and  
he ~~won't~~ <sup>CAN'T</sup> prevent permanent  
break.

B. If break occurs, he does  
not "intend to have another  
Dien Bien Phu;" will with-  
draw to Haiphong.

1. Hanoi dependent daily  
coal supplies for  
electricity and water  
purification; already  
reported low in rice  
supplies due Viet  
Minh harassment.

IV. General impression our service attachés  
is that delta, except Haiphong bridge-  
head, can't last 30 days under heavy  
attack.

V. Assistant army attaché Hanoi says  
full attack would not bring disin-  
tegration French regular forces,  
though morale poor.

VI. Army attaché Saigon sees piecemeal  
employment enemy battle corps in  
delta, rather than full-scale attack.

A. Enemy could avoid head-on  
collision heavier armed  
French forces and exposure  
air attack.

VII. French planning build-up, reorganization delta defenses; will try hold  
delta.

A. Army attaché Saigon says  
total delta infantry soon  
to be 117 battalions.

B. Plan is quick increase  
mobile forces by as many  
as 15 battalions (to total  
36).

C. 10 to 13 coming from Laos.

D. Abandonment small, static  
posts will provide more  
mobile forces.

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E. French also plan concentrate mobile strength in north delta; southern area to be held by Vietnamese.

I. Initially, mobile units will support Vietnamese.

F. American chargé reports that Governor Tri of Tonkin and key Catholic Bishop of Buichu reflect a "mounting sense of panic and a feeling that the last act is about to open."

VIII. Laos, to be stripped of 10 to 13 battalions for reinforcing delta, faces possible rapid deterioration of security situation.

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A. Viet Minh regular strength in Laos, although only 10 battalions, expected to take advantage of French exodus and increase harassment of local forces. There also 8,000 irregulars.

B. Weak Laotian army totals 13 battalions. Also 2,500 auxiliaries.

IX. Meanwhile, reports political coup drew blank looks French, Laotian officials.

A. But Lao officials known be suspicious Prince Petsarath; been watching his activities.

B. American Legation Vientiane feels Petsarath may intend seizing throne rather than premiership.